

Ugni molinae Fruit as a Source of Bioactive Compounds with Good Quality Traits

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Abstract

Since the intake of fruits and vegetables displays important effects on the incidence of several chronic diseases in humans, consumers' attention worldwide is focused on the identification of functional foods. In this sense, *Ugni molinae* (murtilla or murta fruit) is an important source of molecules with a strong antioxidant capacity that is widely used as a medicinal plant in Southern Argentina-Chile. Research on murtilla berries showed that this fruit and its leaves can be an excellent source of polyphenols and bioactive compounds with antibacterial and antioxidant capacity. This review is aimed at providing valuable information and discussing the available literature focused on four principal points: (i) fruit quality and plant physiology, (ii) compound content with bioactive properties, (iii) health properties for consumers of the fruit and leaves, and (iv) challenges for future research. Based on these four points, we propose that murtilla fruit can be a potential ingredient for new functional food products.